The Peace Prayer of St. Francis

Original Text of the Peace Prayer

Belle prière à faire pendant la Messe

Seigneur, faites de moi un instrument de votre paix.

Là où il y a de la haine, que je mette l'amour.

Là où il y a l'offense, que je mette le pardon.

Là où il y a la discorde, que je mette l'union.

Là où il y a l'erreur, que je mette la vérité.

Là où il y a le doute, que je mette la foi.

Là où il y a le désespoir, que je mette l'espérance.

Là où il y a les ténèbres, que je mette votre lumière.

Là où il y a la tristesse, que je mette la joie.

Ô Maître, que je ne cherche pas tant à être consolé qu'à consoler,

à être compris qu'à comprendre,

à être aimé qu'à aimer,

car c'est en donnant qu'on reçoit,

c'est en s'oubliant qu'on trouve,

c'est en pardonnant qu'on est pardonné,

c'est en mourant qu'on ressuscite à l'éternelle vie.

SOURCE: LA CLOCHETTE, N° 12, DÉC. 1912, P. 285.

ORIGIN OF THIS PRAYER

The first appearance of the Peace Prayer occurred in France in 1912 in a small spiritual magazine called La Clochette (The Little Bell). It was published in Paris by a Catholic association known as La Ligue de la Sainte-Messe (The Holy Mass League), founded in 1901 by a French priest, Father Esther Bouquerel (1855-1923). The prayer bore the title of 'Belle prière à faire pendant la messe' (A Beautiful Prayer to Say During the Mass), and was published anonymously. The author could possibly have been Father Bouquerel himself, but the identity of the author remains a mystery.

The prayer was sent in French to Pope Benedict XV in 1915 by the French Marquis Stanislas de La Rochethulon. This was soon followed by its 1916 appearance, in Italian, in L'Osservatore Romano [the Vatican's daily newspaper]. Around 1920, the prayer was printed by a French Franciscan priest on the back of an image of St. Francis with the title 'Prière pour la paix' (Prayer for Peace) but without being attributed to the saint. Between the two world wars, the prayer circulated in Europe and was translated into English. Its has been attributed the first time to saint Francis in 1927 by a French Protestant Movement, Les Chevaliers du Prince de la Paix (The Knights of the Prince

of Peace), founded by Étienne Bach (1892-1986).

The first translation in English that we know of appeared in 1936 in Living Courageously, a book by Kirby Page (1890-1957), a Disciple of Christ minister, pacifist, social evangelist, writer and editor of The World Tomorrow (New York City). Page clearly attributed the text to St. Francis of Assisi. During World War II and immediately after, this prayer for peace began circulating widely as the Prayer of St. Francis, specially through Francis cardinal Spellman's books, and over the years has gained a worldwide popularity with people of all faiths.

For more information : see the book by Dr. Christian Renoux, La prière pour la paix attribuée à saint François : une énigme à résoudre, Paris, Editions franciscaines, 2001, 210 p. : 12.81 euros + shipping (ISBN : 2-85020-096-4). -- Order From: Éditions franciscaines, 9, rue Marie-Rose F-75014 Paris.

Note: Dr. Christian Renoux, is continuing his research on the propagation of this prayer, and is looking for new information about its publication in English between 1925 and 1945, and in all other languages between 1912 and today. Our thanks to Dr. Renoux for permission to publish the Original Text of this very popular Prayer and the history of its origin.

The Prayer of Father Mychal

This is a short prayer, favored by some speakers to begin their talk, or sponsors to begin work with a sponsee. Some have attributed it to Father Mychal of the NYPD, who was killed in the World Trade Center disaster of 2001, but it may be much older..

"God, take away everything
I think I know about you
and About me,
and teach me."